

shape with large mandibles. The elytra possess carinae, which are less marked in the female. The five specimens collected measured between 17 and 22 mm, the two females being slightly larger than the three males.

Spondylis buprestoides is the only species of its genus in Europe. According to du Chatenet (2000, *Coléoptères Phytophages d'Europe*, Volume I, N.A.P. Editions) it is relatively common and widely distributed throughout continental Europe but is absent from the north of the Scandinavian peninsula, the south of Spain and north of Italy. It is also absent from the extreme north of France and part of Belgium.

The species develops in pine or other coniferous trees and it is likely that those specimens have been introduced with some timber. According to Hickin (1987, *Loughorn Beetles of the British Isles*, Shire Natural History) it has been known for some loughorn species, for example *Ergates Faber* L., to have a full life cycle in British timber yard. A timber merchant is very close to the collection locations (TQ 467670) and two building yards are also selling timber in the vicinity (TQ 468675 and TQ 468674). Pieces of sawn but not processed pine, some still with bark, used for packaging were found in a skip at the timber merchant. The beetles could have been imported in such unprocessed timber. Although, the British climate would not be an issue, it seems unlikely that the species will settle durably as there are very few conifers in the area (one pine, three dead and one live spruces in the church yard and a few conifers in the near by Orpington Priory Park – TQ 467668).— MARC E. MIQUEL, 7 Albert Road, St Mary Cray, Kent BR5 4AF (E-mail: marc.miquel@kcl.ac.uk).

Larvae of Four-spotted Moth *Tyta luctuosa* (D. & S.)(Lep.: Noctuidae) found in Lincolnshire

The Four-spotted Moth *Tyta luctuosa* is generally associated with sun-trap situations, light, well-drained soils which warm up rapidly, and the larvae feed only on Field Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis*. On 26 June 2003 Robin Field, Graham Watkins and I found seven larvae of the Four-spotted Moth *Tyta luctuosa* during a nocturnal search from 23.00 – 01.30 hours on a south-facing slope of limestone grassland in a valley in Lincolnshire.

This site is known to have supported a population of this moth since the 1980s (Tony Smith, pers. comm.) and on 8 June 2002, James McGill and I counted a minimum of 62 adults on this slope. This is the highest total on any British site since 2000 (Waring, 2002. Wildlife reports - Moths. *British Wildlife* **14**: 58). Six of the seven larvae found on 26 June 2003 were in the final instar. Most were in a small part of the site in a south-facing position, at the foot of a small quarry, amongst a grassy sward dominated by Tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum* and other grasses, with trailing Field Bindweed and some small patches of bare ground. The sward height was a fairly uniform at 7 centimetres, measured by the Boorman drop-disc method (see Waring, 1992. *British Butterfly Conservation Society News* **50**: 51-53). The site has received apparently favourable grazing management by cattle during the decade I have known it. It is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is covered by a management agreement with English Nature.

Adjacent to the SSSI is another open field of similar habitat. This has a different ownership and the owners are interested in the moth and other wildlife. We have seen a few Four-spotted moths flying over this land, but were unsure whether they were breeding residents or wanderers from the SSSI. On the evening of 29 June 2004, I searched this area for larvae after dark to see if I could confirm breeding here. I am delighted to report that I found larvae at each of four likely-looking spots at which I searched, throughout the upper slope of this property, spread over a distance of just over 100 metres. I found a total of nine larvae during my forty-minute search, which started at midnight. I was finding larvae at the rate of about one per minute of actual search, with the rest of the time spent walking from one spot to the next and in filming the larvae and sward conditions on video-tape. I am sure there were a great many more larvae on the slope. The sward is best described as mainly grasses, with much Field Bindweed entwined up the vertical stems of the grass flowerheads and with a very low density of plants of other species present. Although the flowerheads of the grasses were up to knee-height, the main bulk of the grass plants was about ankle-deep only and was so sparse that much bare limey earth was visible between the grass-blades. It was a dark night with no moon visible, and dry, calm, mild weather (I was searching in rolled shirt-sleeves). The owners have been informed of this discovery of larvae and plans are now in place to maintain the habitat in its present condition.

The above work took place as part of a national project on the Four-spotted Moth, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species. The work is being coordinated by Writtle College and the Cambridgeshire and Essex Branch of Butterfly Conservation, with funding from English Nature and the help of many volunteers. I would particularly like to thank Robin Field, Chairman of this Branch of BC, for all his help with the running of this project, and the private owners of the sites for their cooperation and interest. For more information on the current status and habits of the Four-spotted moth, see the references below. — PAUL WARING, Reader, Centre for Environment & Rural Affairs, Writtle College, Essex. Contact address: Windmill View, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6LS.

MICHAEL CHALMERS-HUNT

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Michael Chalmers-Hunt, editor of this journal from 1973 to 1985. We would hope to publish an entomological obituary in due course and the Editor would be pleased to hear from anyone who may wish to contribute to this.